

Memorandum

TO: Skagit County Planning Commission

FROM: Betsy Stevenson, AICP, Senior Planner, Team Supervisor

DATE: February 26, 2013

REGARDING: SMP Update Draft Aquaculture section

INTRODUCTION

The aquaculture section was withheld from the submittal to Ecology of the working draft SMP. The additional time has been spent in discussion with the shoreline advisory committee (SAC) and a subcommittee (Kevin Bright, Bill Dewey and Tim Hyatt) refining and reworking it, in an effort to find common ground and consensus. Both Kevin and Bill have provided expertise in their respective areas of finfish net pen and shellfish aquaculture. The background below outlines the multitude of meetings that have been held on the subject.

Skagit County amended the aquaculture section of the SMP in 1994. This was the result of much interest and several applications for different types of aquaculture. It seems safe to say that most all forms of aquaculture have changed and evolved over the years. Advances in technology and the market demand have influenced cultivation and harvest techniques, as well as the types of plants and animals that are grown and raised. Much of the shellfish aquaculture in Skagit County has existed for many years. Samish Bay is a very productive area for shellfish aquaculture, although it is heavily impacted by water quality closures after heavy rainfall events (fecal coliform). Atlantic salmon are raised in net pen facilities in Skagit Bay and Deepwater Bay on Cypress Island.

The Department of Ecology has developed an excellent resource in its Aquaculture Interim Guidance, which is provided to you as part of the packet of materials. In an effort to avoid duplication, I will direct you to that document for information on the various permits, processes and issues that are part of the update process for aquaculture. There has been a concerted effort to coordinate information sharing and permit review, to streamline processes and provide consistency wherever it is feasible to do so.

PLEASE NOTE: The draft that is being sent to you is the one that was sent to the SAC on February 22. It does not include any of the suggested revisions that have been received since the SAC meeting on February 19. The suggested revisions are still being considered. The discussion continues with the SAC, so there may be some revisions made. A revised draft will be forthcoming.

BACKGROUND



April 24, 2012

The shoreline advisory committee (SAC) first considered aquaculture. Some recommendations were made for revisions to the. One of the members had requested the opportunity to propose an alternative draft section on aquaculture.

May 15, 2012 and June 14, 2012

An alternative aquaculture section was presented to the SAC . After some additional discussion of the new proposal the SAC members agreed that more work was needed. A subcommittee was formed to spend more time on the aquaculture section, to get it cleaned up with fewer track changes and comments. The SAC agreed to review it again once the subcommittee, consisting of Bill, Tim and Kevin, had edited the draft and come to some agreement on the proposal. The SAC also recommended that it not be passed on to the Planning Commission yet.

June 22, 2012

The subcommittee met to review the draft aquaculture section. Some revisions and edits were suggested and commented on by members of the subcommittee at the meeting and through follow up email.

July 12, 2012

The SAC discussed the recent revisions from the subcommittee. There was still disagreement between members of the subcommittee, which the SAC discussed and provided some guidance. The smaller group agreed to meet again and work out as many issues as possible. The SAC would then review that version of the draft section and make some determinations on the areas of disagreement, if some remain.

July 18, 2012

The subcommittee met again to work through the areas of disagreement and edit language that would be acceptable.

July 24, 2012

The Planning Commission held a study session on the draft SMP and was provided an update on the aquaculture section. They agreed with SAC members in attendance that the SAC should continue working on it and bring it back to the Planning Commission for their review when it was ready.

November 6, 2012

SAC meeting was held. Several of the members were unable to attend, but a brief update on the aquaculture section was presented. The subcommittee agreed to meet again to get as much resolution as possible, with the areas of disagreement identified for discussion.

December 3, 2012

The subcommittee met for several hours going through the aquaculture section. Several of the previous revisions were discussed and debated. Some additional items were agreed to and resolved. Some were not. Additional suggested changes were made. Betsy agreed to clean it up and incorporate comments to get out to the SAC.

February 19, 2013

SAC meeting was held specifically to review and discuss the aquaculture section. The group listened to the subcommittee present the issues and the areas where there is still some disagreement. Good

questions and comments from the members showed that there were very few areas remaining that weren't close to resolution. Some suggested revisions to the language were proposed. The SAC wanted to be sure that a recommended draft section would be sent to the Planning Commission for discussion and consideration. A new draft would be prepared, reflective of the discussion. The SAC was hopeful that the smaller subcommittee could work out any details after seeing the new revised draft. They did agree to discuss it again if the subcommittee could not resolve the outstanding issues.

February 20, 2013

The revised version was sent to the subcommittee for review. Comments were received that raised issues that were not brought up at the February 19 SAC meeting. For that reason, these comments were forwarded by email to SAC members.

February 22, 2013

The clean version of the draft was sent by email to the SAC, along with the comments from one of the subcommittee members, with a request that they review and comment by February 25.

February 26

Additional comments from SAC members were received and some additional revisions are being made to the draft section. In order to get this out to you a week in advance of the meeting, you are being sent the draft that the SAC received by email on February 22. If revisions are made based on the comments, a new draft section will be forthcoming.